Attorney Docket No.: FMCE-P101

Remarks

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

The present amendment to the specification adds a more detailed description of certain catalysts which are constructed using PI Micro reactor technology. These additions to the specification are fully supported by U.S. Patent No. 6,211,255, which was incorporated into the original specification by reference. Therefore, applicants submit that the amendment to the specification is proper.

Claims 1, 6, 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as reciting a use which results in an improper definition of a process. In particular, the Examiner asserts that these claims recite the use of PI micro reactor technology and the Fisher-Tropsch process, but do not set forth any steps for these processes.

Applicants have accordingly canceled claims 6 and 10 and amended claim 1 to eliminate the term "PI micro reactor technology". Instead of this term, applicants have added specific recitations to the structure of the catalyst which is constructed using PI micro reactor technology. Support for these amendments appears in the concurrent amendments to the specification.

However, applicants have not amended claim 9, which recites the use of the Fisher-Tropsch process. Applicants maintain that this process is sufficiently well known in the art that no further recital of its specific steps is required.

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Arcuri et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,262,131), which the Examiner mistakenly refers to as Agee. However, the claims have been amended to further distinguish applicants' invention from this patent. Therefore, applicants submit that their claimed invention is novel over Agee.

With respect to independent claims 1 and 13, Arcuri does not disclose a monolithic catalyst which comprises a cell density of between about 100 cells/in^2 and about 1000 cells/in^2. As described in applicants' specification, such a cell density results in channels that are sufficiently narrow to promote Taylor flow, which is important to prevent back mixing of the constituents. In contrast, Arcuri discloses a packed-bed reactor in which the flow paths through the catalyst preferably have a length-to-diameter ration of less than 10. This design is specifically chosen to promote non-Taylor flow. Thus, Arcuri discloses a different reactor which uses a different catalyst than that recited in claims 1 and 13.

Therefore, Arcuri does not anticipate claims 1 and 13. Furthermore, since the remaining claims depend from claims 1 and 13, Arcuri also does not anticipate these claims.

New claims 21-31 have been added to the application. These claims recite features of the invention which are supported by either the original or the amended specification. Moreover, these claims depend from claims 1 and 13. Therefore, applicants submit that new claims 21-31 are allowable over Arcuri.

The prior art made of record but not relied upon has been considered but is not believed to be pertinent to the patentability of the present invention.

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In light of the foregoing, claims 1-5, 9, 13 and 19-31 are submitted as allowable. Favorable action is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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